

Written reports from relevant international organizations - Report from The International Pest Risk Research Group (IPRRG)

1. The International Pest Risk Research Group (IPRRG) consists of scientists mostly working for, or with, National Plant Protection Organizations in Government agencies or institutions. Members have expertise in plant pest risk analysis (PRA) and related matters. Some of the members of IPRRG were previously in the International Advisory Group for Pest Risk Analysis (IAGPRA). IAGPRA provided expert advice and support to the CPM, its subsidiary bodies, contracting parties and the IPPC Secretariat on PRA related issues, in particular with respect to building capacity for PRA. IPRRG has now taken on this role (Agenda item 14.3 from CPM 14 refers).
2. Text describing IPRRG and its role as an external cooperating organization is available on its IPPC webpage¹.
3. During 2023 IPRRG continued its webinar series on pest risks and related issues with two presentations being delivered; (i) An overview of the International Seed Federation Regulated Pest List Database, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vgc8_1BrXaI and Climate Suitability Analysis at EFSA: Core Activities and Future Challenges (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hfhr6kR1RW4>). Webinars from previous years are available to view at <https://pestrisk.org/iprrg-webinar-series/>
4. The 15th annual IPRRG conference took place in Nairobi, Kenya in partnership with the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service, CABI and Cervantes Agritech, 21st to 24th September 2023. This was the first IPRRG meeting to take place in Africa. Participants were from Africa, (e.g. Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia), Asia & Oceania, Europe, and North America. Representatives from CABI and EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) were also present. A key theme of the conference was collaboration and capacity building. Strengthening capacity to manage pest risks was recognised as crucial in safeguarding agricultural and ecological systems. By fostering collaboration among researchers, policymakers and the private sector, workers in plant health and wider biosecurity can build the foundations for a more resilient and sustainable future. The conference consisted of 16 scientific talks, several involving emerging pests and the use of modelling to better inform pest risk analysis (PRA) and related decision making. During workshop discussions participants discussed the most challenging parts of PRA and why they are challenging; whether other disciplines are needed to support PRA activities and how PRA workers can engage with specialists from other disciplines. During feedback sessions it was clear that every aspect of a PRA can be a challenge depending on the resources available (e.g. access to information, staff skills and time). Sharing information was key. Modellers and economists were identified as people who could most support PRA workers and having joint meetings/ conferences/ workshops with different disciplines would help, although funding may be needed to facilitate collaborative working. Workshop participants took part in field visits to the production and packing site of a cut flower producer, specialising in exporting roses to Europe, and to a specialist bio-control company, to see industry practices in operation. The IPRRG website provides the detailed meeting agenda and abstracts to all the presentations and posters.
5. Members of IPRRG have recently prepared a series of five scientific papers on climate change to assist pest risk assessors and pest risk managers understand how climate change affects pest risks and the PRA process. The five papers are to be published in a special on-line edition of EPPO Bulletin together with a paper by the IPCC working group on climate change. All papers address climate change in relation to plant health, particularly in relation to PRA.

¹ IPRRG webpage under IPPC site: <https://www.ippc.int/en/partners/organizations-page-in-ipp/internationalpestriskresearchgroup/>

6. The next meeting of IPRRG will take place in Malaga, Spain, 17th – 20th September 2024. You can find out more about IPRRG on its own dedicated web page: <https://pestrisk.org/>

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